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Homicide in Massachusetts 1993

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Massachusetts State Police
Division of Investigations and Intelligence
Crime Reporting Unit

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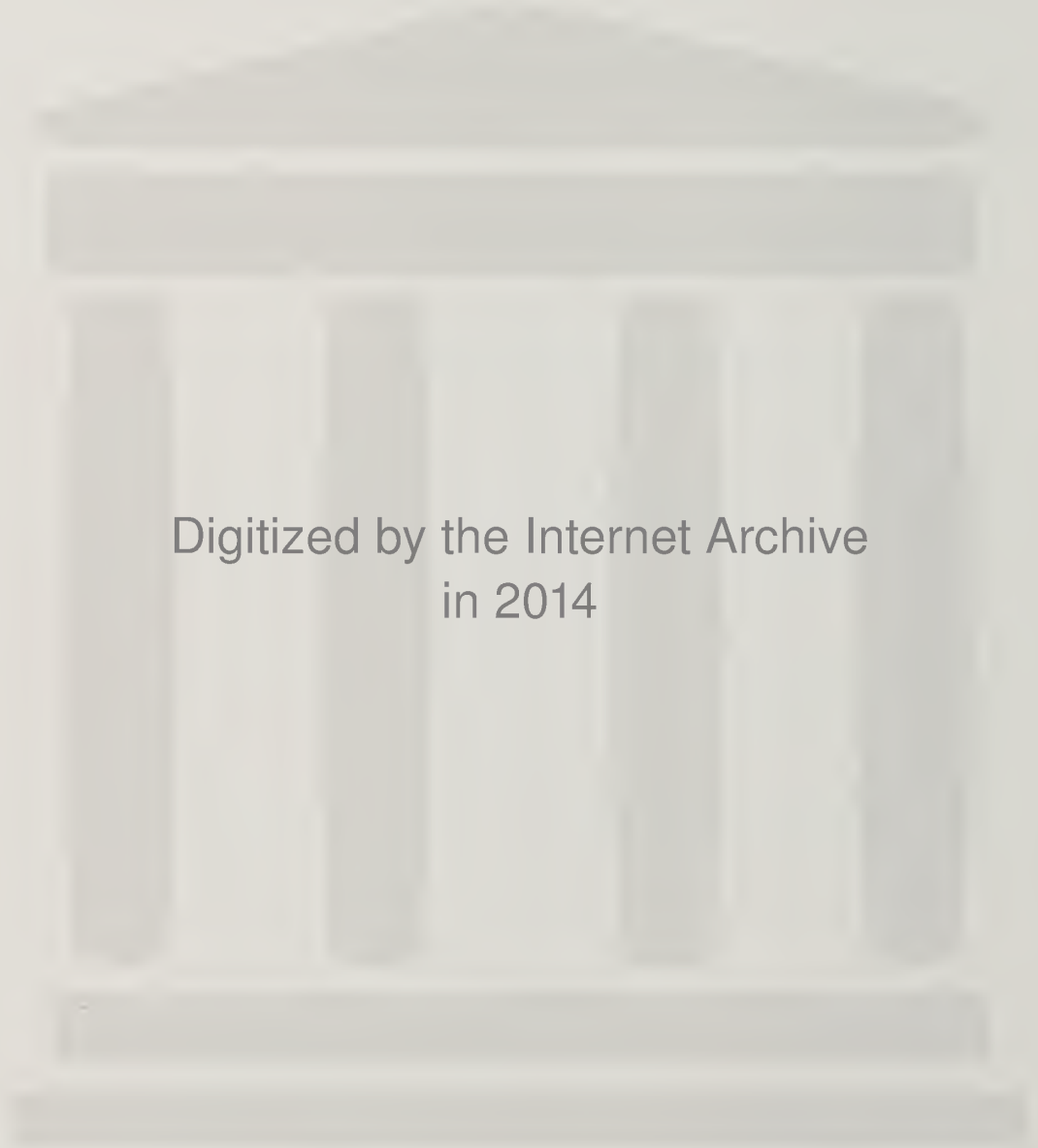
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Executive Summary

211 homicides were reported to the Crime Reporting Unit during 1993. This compares to the 172 homicides reported during 1992, and 210 homicides reported in 1991. Data were received from 39 cities and towns, the Massachusetts State Police, and the MBTA Police.

Victim Information

49.3% of homicides victims were White, 46% were Black, and 4.7% were Asian. 76.8% were male. The average (mean) age of victims was 29.2; the median age (the point at which half the ages were above and below it) was 26; and the modal age (the most frequent age category) was 23.

Offender Information

Data was available on 159 offenders. 53.5% of offenders was White, 42.1% were Black, and 4.4% were Asian. 91.2% of offenders were male. The average (mean) age of offenders was 27.8; the median age was 25; and the modal age was 18.

Offense Information

The most commonly cited homicide circumstance was 'Other Arguments', occurring 35 times (23.8%). Other frequently cited circumstances were 'Domestic' (31 cases, 21.1%); 'Robbery' (21 cases, 14.3%); and 'Narcotics Law violations' (14 cases, 9.5%). Other circumstances were named in fewer than 8% of cases.

Firearms were the most frequently used type of weapon, being involved in 43.2% of cases. Knives were used in 27.1% of homicides.

The victim was known to the offender in the majority of cases where information was available. Only in 19.4% was the victim/offender relationship listed as "Stranger."

The most common location of homicides was listed as 'Residence', occurring in 86 cases (41.7%). The only other frequently listed location was 'Highway/road', occurring in 81 cases (39.3%).

Homicide is an intra-racial crime: 80.9% of Black victims are killed by Black offenders; 83.8% of White victims are killed by White offenders; and 83.3% of Asian victims are killed by Asian offenders.

Homicide in Boston

The Boston Police Department reported 98 homicides in 1993, 46% of the statewide total. As the Boston data are significantly different from the statewide information, it is discussed here separately. *It should be noted that information was unavailable in a significant number of cases. In the following narrative, and in the tables that follow, the numbers and percentages only refer to cases which had data.*

Victim Information

The homicide victim in Boston is Black in 67.3% of cases, White in 29.6% and Asian in 3.1% The victim is male in 85.7% of cases.

In other Massachusetts communities, the homicide victim was White in 66.4% of cases, Black in 27.4% and Asian in 6.2% The victim was male in 69% of cases of homicide outside Boston.

The average (mean) age of victims in Boston was 27.7 years; the median age was 25, and the modal age was 16. In areas of the Commonwealth outside Boston, the average (mean) age of victims was 30.5 year; the median age was 29; and the modal age was 32.

Offender Information

The offender in Boston is Black in 69.6% of cases, White in 28.3%, and Asian in 2.2% The offender is male in 89.1%

The offender in other Massachusetts communities was White in 63.7% of cases, Black in 31% and Asian in 5.3% The offender is male in 92% of cases.

The average (mean) age of offenders in Boston was 26.5 years; the median age was 21, and the modal age was 16.

In areas of the Commonwealth outside Boston, the average (mean) age of offenders was 28.3 year; the median age was 26; and the modal age was 22.

Offense Information

The most frequently cited homicide circumstances in Boston are "Other Arguments" (17 cases, 30.9%), "Domestic" (11 cases, 20.0%), "Robbery" (9 cases, 16.4%), and "Narcotics Law" (6 cases, 10.9%).

In other Massachusetts communities, the most frequently cited homicide circumstances are "Domestic" (20 cases, 21.7%), "Other Arguments" (18 cases, 19.6%), "Robbery" (12 cases, 13%), and "Arson" (10 cases, 10.9%).

Firearms were used in 67.7% of all Boston homicides. In other Massachusetts communities, firearms were used in 40.5% of cases.
In 68.8% of Boston cases, the victim's relationship to the offender was listed as

'Acquaintance'. In other Massachusetts communities, "Acquaintance" was listed in 34.6% of cases.

The most frequent location for a homicide in Boston was listed as "Highway/road" (51 cases, 52.0%). The second most frequently listed location was "Residence" (31 cases, 31.6%). In other Massachusetts communities, these percentages were reversed: "Residence" accounted for 50.9% of cases, and "Highway" for 27.8%

Homicide by Gender of Victim

The characteristics of homicides vary significantly when the gender of the victims is considered. In the following, information concerning male and female victims will be discussed.

Victim Information

Female victims were White in 67.3% of cases, Black in 28.6%, and Asian in 4.1%
Male victims were White in 43.8% of cases, Black in 51.2%, and Asian in 4.9%

The average (mean) age of female victims was 28.5; the median age was 26; and the modal age was less than 1 year.

The average (mean) age of male victims was 29.4; the median age was 26; and the modal age was 22.

Offender Information

For female victims, the offender was White in 69.2% of cases, and Black in 30.8%
For male victims, the offender was White in 48.3% of case, Black in 45.8%,and Asian in 5.8%.

The age of offenders against female victims had an average (mean) age of 31.4; a median age of 29; and a modal age of 18.

The age of offenders against male victims had an average (mean) age of 26.5; a median age of 23; and a modal age of 20.

The offender was male in 92.3% of cases with female victims, and 90.8% of cases with male victims.

Offense Information

For female victims, the most frequently cited homicide circumstance was "Domestic" (17 cases, 43.6%). For male victims, the most frequently cited circumstance was "Other Argument" (31 cases, 28.7%).

Female victims are most frequently killed with a knife (15 cases, 32.6%). Male victims are most frequently killed with a handgun (53 cases, 32.9%)

The female victim was identified as an "Acquaintance" to the offender in 34.2% of cases, the most frequent single category of relationship cited, compared to 52.7% of males who were listed as 'Acquaintances".

67.4% of female victims were killed in a "Residence", compared to 34.4% of male victims.

Homicides by Agency Reporting

Agency	Homicides
Arlington	1
Athol	1
Barnstable	2
Boston	98
Brockton	15
Brookline	1
Cambridge	2
Clinton	1
Dedham	2
Everett	1
Fall River	4
Fitchburg	1
Lawrence	3
Leicester	1
Leominster	4
Lowell	6
Lynn	8
Malden	2
Methuen	2
Millis	1
New Bedford	3
Newton	1
Northampton	2
Pepperell	1
Plymouth	1
Quincy	2
Revere	1
Salem	1
Sharon	1
Springfield	20
Walpole	1
Watertown	2
Wellfleet	1
West Springfield	1
Weymouth	1
Wilmington	1
Worcester	12
SP Bristol	1
MBTA - Suffolk	2

Victim Information

Race

	Frequency	Percent
Asian	10	4.7%
Black	97	46.0%
White	104	49.3%
Total	211	100.0%

Sex

	Frequency	Percent
Female	49	23.2%
Male	162	76.8%
Total	211	100.0%

Age

	Frequency	Percent
Under 5	12	5.7%
10 to 14	6	2.9%
15 to 19	31	14.8%
20 to 24	41	19.5%
25 to 29	29	13.8%
30 to 34	32	15.2%
35 to 39	20	9.5%
40 to 44	14	6.7%
45 to 49	8	3.8%
50 to 54	5	2.4%
55 to 59	1	.5%
60 to 64	2	1.0%
65 to 69	2	1.0%
70 to 74	4	1.9%
75 and over	3	1.4%
Total	210	100.0%

Mean 29.201 Median 26.000 Mode 23.000

Offender Information

Race

	Frequency	Percent
Asian	7	4.4%
Black	67	42.1%
White	85	53.5%
Total	159	100.0%

Sex

	Frequency	Percent
Female	14	8.8%
Male	145	91.2%
Total	159	100.0%

Age

	Frequency	Percent
10 to 14	1	.6%
15 to 19	40	26.0%
20 to 24	35	22.7%
25 to 29	22	14.3%
30 to 34	16	10.4%
35 to 39	19	12.3%
40 to 44	5	3.2%
45 to 49	11	7.1%
50 to 54	2	1.3%
55 to 59	2	1.3%
60 to 64	1	.6%
Total	154	100.0%

Mean 27.779 Median 25.000 Mode 18.000

Circumstance of Crime

	Frequency	Percent
Prostitution.....	3	2.0%
Narcotics laws.....	14	9.5%
Rape.....	1	.7%
Other felony.....	2	1.4%
Robbery.....	21	14.3%
Lovers triangle.....	1	.7%
Killed by babysitter....	3	2.0%
Brawl under alcohol.....	4	2.7%
Brawl under drugs.....	5	3.4%
Argument over money.....	1	.7%
Other arguments.....	35	23.8%
Gangland killing.....	2	1.4%
Youth gang killing.....	8	5.4%
Other.....	11	7.5%
Arson.....	2	1.4%
Domestic/family.....	31	21.1%
Child Abuse.....	3	2.0%
Total.....	147	100.0%

Weapon Used

	Frequency	Percent
Firearm.....	41	19.8%
Handgun.....	62	30.0%
Rifle.....	6	2.9%
Shotgun.....	1	.5%
Knife.....	56	27.1%
Blunt object.....	21	10.1%
Personal weapon.....	10	4.8%
Fire.....	2	1.0%
Strangulation.....	6	2.9%
Asphyxiation.....	2	1.0%
Total.....	207	100.0%

Victim's Relationship to Offender

	Frequency	Percent
Stepfather	2	1.6%
Stepson	1	.8%
Stepdaughter	1	.8%
Wife	8	6.2%
Neighbor	3	2.3%
Acquaintance	61	47.3%
Boyfriend	3	2.3%
Girlfriend	5	3.9%
Ex-wife	1	.8%
Friend	4	3.1%
Homosexual relation	2	1.6%
Other known	6	4.7%
Stranger	25	19.4%
Mother	1	.8%
Son	3	2.3%
Daughter	1	.8%
Brother	2	1.6%
Total	129	100.0%

Location of Offense

	Frequency	Percent
Air/bus/train term	2	1.0%
Bar/nightclub	4	1.9%
Commercial/office building	2	1.0%
Convenience store	2	1.0%
drug store/doctor's office/hospital	1	.5%
Field/woods	3	1.5%
Government/public building	2	1.0%
Highway/road/alley	81	39.3%
Jail/prison	1	.5%
Lake/waterway	4	1.9%
Liquor store	1	.5%
Parking lot/garage	4	1.9%
Residence/home	86	41.7%
Restaurant	2	1.0%
Service/gas station	1	.5%
Speciality store	1	.5%
Other/unknown	9	4.4%
Total	206	100.0%

Boston & Massachusetts Homicides

Victim Information

Race

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Asian	7	6.2%	3	3.1%
Black	31	27.4%	66	67.3%
White	75	66.4%	29	29.6%
Total	113	100.0%	98	100.0%

Sex

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	35	31.0%	14	14.3%
Male	78	69.0%	84	85.7%
Total	113	100.0%	98	100.0%

Age

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Under 5	7	6.3%	5	5.1%
10 to 14	4	3.6%	2	2.0%
15 to 19	11	9.8%	20	20.4%
20 to 24	20	17.9%	21	21.4%
25 to 29	16	14.3%	13	13.3%
30 to 34	21	18.8%	11	11.2%
35 to 39	10	8.9%	10	10.2%
40 to 44	10	8.9%	4	4.1%
45 to 49	4	3.6%	4	4.1%
50 to 54	1	.9%	4	4.1%
55 to 59			1	1.0%
60 to 64	1	.9%	1	1.0%
65 to 69	1	.9%	1	1.0%
70 to 74	3	2.7%	1	1.0%
75 and over	3	2.7%		
Total	112	100.0%	98	100.0%

Mass w/o Boston
Mean 30.534 Median 29.000 Mode 32.000

Boston only
Mean 27.678 Median 25.000 Mode 16.000

* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Offender Information

Race

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Asian	6	5.3%	1	2.2%
Black	35	31.0%	32	69.6%
White	72	63.7%	13	28.3%
Total	113	100.0%	46	100.0%

Sex

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	9	8.0%	5	10.9%
Male	104	92.0%	41	89.1%
Total	113	100.0%	46	100.0%

Age

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
10 to 14	1	.9%		
15 to 19	23	21.3%	17	37.0%
20 to 24	27	25.0%	8	17.4%
25 to 29	16	14.8%	6	13.0%
30 to 34	12	11.1%	4	8.7%
35 to 39	14	13.0%	5	10.9%
40 to 44	4	3.7%	1	2.2%
45 to 49	8	7.4%	3	6.5%
50 to 54	1	.9%	1	2.2%
55 to 59	2	1.9%		
60 to 64			1	2.2%
Total	108	100.0%	46	100.0%

Mass w/o Boston
Mean 28.324 Median 26.000 Mode 22.000

Boston Only
Mean 26.500 Median 21.000 Mode 16.000

Circumstance of Crime

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Prostitution	3	3.3%		
Narcotics laws	8	8.7%	6	10.9%
Rape	1	1.1%		
Other felony	2	2.2%		
Robbery	12	13.0%	9	16.4%
Lovers triangle	1	1.1%		
Killed by babysitter	2	2.2%	1	1.8%
Brawl under alcohol	4	4.3%		
Brawl under drugs	3	3.3%	2	3.6%
Argument over money	1	1.1%		
Other arguments	18	19.6%	17	30.9%
Gangland killing	2	2.2%		
Youth gang killing	1	1.1%	7	12.7%
Other	10	10.9%	1	1.8%
Arson	1	1.1%	1	1.8%
Domestic/family	20	21.7%	11	20.0%
Child Abuse	3	3.3%		
Total	92	100.0%	55	100.0%

Weapon Used

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Firearm	7	6.3%	34	35.4%
Handgun	34	30.6%	28	29.2%
Rifle	4	3.6%	2	2.1%
Shotgun			1	1.0%
Knife	39	35.1%	17	17.7%
Blunt object	10	9.0%	11	11.5%
Personal weapon	9	8.1%	1	1.0%
Fire	1	.9%	1	1.0%
Strangulation	6	5.4%		
Asphyxiation	1	.9%	1	1.0%
Total	111	100.0%	96	100.0%

Victim's Relationship to Offender

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Stepfather			2	4.2%
Stepson	1	1.2%		
Stepdaughter	1	1.2%		
Wife	7	8.6%	1	2.1%
Neighbor	3	3.7%		
Acquaintance	28	34.6%	33	68.8%
Boyfriend	1	1.2%	2	4.2%
Girlfriend	5	6.2%		
Ex-wife	1	1.2%		
Friend	4	4.9%		
Homosexual relation	1	1.2%	1	2.1%
Other known	6	7.4%		
Stranger	16	19.8%	9	18.8%
Mother	1	1.2%		
Son	3	3.7%		
Daughter	1	1.2%		
Brother	2	2.5%		
Total	81	100.0%	48	100.0%

Location of Offense

	Mass w/o Boston		Boston only	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Air/bus/train term	1	.9%	1	1.0%
Bar/nightclub	3	2.8%	1	1.0%
Commercial/office building	1	.9%	1	1.0%
Convenience store	2	1.9%		
drug store/doctor's office/hospital	1	.9%		
Field/woods	2	1.9%	1	1.0%
Government/public building	1	.9%	1	1.0%
Highway/road/alley	30	27.8%	51	52.0%
Jail/prison			1	1.0%
Lake/waterway	2	1.9%	2	2.0%
Liquor store	1	.9%		
Parking lot/garage	2	1.9%	2	2.0%
Residence/home	55	50.9%	31	31.6%
Restaurant	1	.9%	1	1.0%
Service/gas station	1	.9%		
Speciality store	1	.9%		
Other/unknown	4	3.7%	5	5.1%
Total	108	100.0%	98	100.0%

Homicides by Victim's Gender

Victim Information

Race

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Asian	2	4.1%	8	4.9%
Black	14	28.6%	83	51.2%
White	33	67.3%	71	43.8%
Total	49	100.0%	162	100.0%

Age

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Under 5	6	12.2%	6	3.7%
10 to 14	2	4.1%	4	2.5%
15 to 19	7	14.3%	24	14.9%
20 to 24	5	10.2%	36	22.4%
25 to 29	9	18.4%	20	12.4%
30 to 34	6	12.2%	26	16.1%
35 to 39	5	10.2%	15	9.3%
40 to 44	4	8.2%	10	6.2%
45 to 49	1	2.0%	7	4.3%
50 to 54	1	2.0%	4	2.5%
55 to 59			1	.6%
60 to 64			2	1.2%
65 to 69			2	1.2%
70 to 74			4	2.5%
75 and over	3	6.1%		
Total	49	100.0%	161	100.0%

Female

Mean	28.561	Median	26.000	Mode	.500

* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Male

Mean	29.396	Median	26.000	Mode	22.000

Offender Information

Race

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Asian			7	5.8%
Black	12	30.8%	55	45.8%
White	27	69.2%	58	48.3%
Total	39	100.0%	120	100.0%

Sex

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Female	3	7.7%	11	9.2%
Male	36	92.3%	109	90.8%
Total	39	100.0%	120	100.0%

Offender's Age

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
10 to 14			1	.9%
15 to 19	7	17.9%	33	28.7%
20 to 24	7	17.9%	28	24.3%
25 to 29	6	15.4%	16	13.9%
30 to 34	4	10.3%	12	10.4%
35 to 39	7	17.9%	12	10.4%
40 to 44	3	7.7%	2	1.7%
45 to 49	2	5.1%	9	7.8%
50 to 54			2	1.7%
55 to 59	2	5.1%		
60 to 64	1	2.6%		
Total	39	100.0%	115	100.0%

Female
Mean 31.410 Median 29.000 Mode 18.000

* Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

Male
Mean 26.548 Median 23.000 Mode 20.000

Circumstance of Offense

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Prostitution	3	7.7%		
Narcotics laws	3	7.7%	11	10.2%
Rape	1	2.6%		
Other felony	1	2.6%	1	.9%
Robbery	2	5.1%	19	17.6%
Lovers triangle	1	2.6%		
Killed by babysitter	2	5.1%	1	.9%
Brawl under alcohol			4	3.7%
Brawl under drugs			5	4.6%
Argument over money			1	.9%
Other arguments	4	10.3%	31	28.7%
Gangland killing			2	1.9%
Youth gang killing	1	2.6%	7	6.5%
Other	1	2.6%	10	9.3%
Arson	2	5.1%		
Domestic/family	17	43.6%	14	13.0%
Child Abuse	1	2.6%	2	1.9%
Total	39	100.0%	108	100.0%

Weapon Used

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Firearm	2	4.3%	39	24.2%
Handgun	9	19.6%	53	32.9%
Rifle			6	3.7%
Shotgun			1	.6%
Knife	15	32.6%	41	25.5%
Blunt object	6	13.0%	15	9.3%
Personal weapon	5	10.9%	5	3.1%
Fire	2	4.3%		
Strangulation	5	10.9%	1	.6%
Asphyxiation	2	4.3%		
Total	46	100.0%	161	100.0%

Victim's Relationship to Offender

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Stepfather			2	2.2%
Stepson			1	1.1%
Stepdaughter	1	2.6%		
Wife	8	21.1%		
Neighbor			3	3.3%
Acquaintance	13	34.2%	48	52.7%
Boyfriend			3	3.3%
Girlfriend	5	13.2%		
Ex-wife	1	2.6%		
Friend			4	4.4%
Homosexual relation	1	2.6%	1	1.1%
Other known	1	2.6%	5	5.5%
Stranger	6	15.8%	19	20.9%
Mother	1	2.6%		
Son			3	3.3%
Daughter	1	2.6%		
Brother			2	2.2%
Total	38	100.0%	91	100.0%

Location of Offense

	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Air/bus/train term			2	1.3%
Bar/nightclub			4	2.5%
Commercial/office building			2	1.3%
Convenience store	1	2.2%	1	.6%
drug store/doctor's office/hospital	1	2.2%		
Field/woods			3	1.9%
Government/public building			2	1.3%
Highway/road/alley	10	21.7%	71	44.4%
Jail/prison			1	.6%
Lake/waterway	1	2.2%	3	1.9%
Liquor store			1	.6%
Parking lot/garage			4	2.5%
Residence/home	31	67.4%	55	34.4%
Restaurant			2	1.3%
Service/gas station			1	.6%
Speciality store			1	.6%
Other/unknown	2	4.3%	7	4.4%
Total	46	100.0%	160	100.0%